

**ABSTRACT**

A portable surface cleaning apparatus comprises a base module for movement along the surface; an upright handle pivotally attached to the base module; a fluid dispensing system including at least one fluid supply tank mounted to the handle or the base module, a dispensing nozzle mounted to the base module for applying a  
5 cleaning fluid to an upholstery or carpet surface to be cleaned, and a heater for heating the fluid to be applied to the surface to be cleaned to a temperature less than boiling; a fluid recovery tank mounted to the handle or the base module for holding recovered fluid; a suction nozzle associated with the base module; a working air conduit extending between the recovery tank and the suction nozzle; and a vacuum source and  
10 fluid communication with the recovery tank for generating a flow of working air from the suction nozzle through the working air conduit and through the recovery tank to thereby recovering fluid from the surface to be cleaned through the suction nozzle and working air conduit and into the recovery tank. A method for cleaning an upholstery or carpet surface in which a fluid cleaning solution is contained in a tank and  
15 dispensed on the surface through a nozzle and the cleaning solution is recovered from the surface with suction and deposited into a recovery tank includes, according to the invention, the steps of admixing an oxidizing agent with the cleaning solution, and heating the admixture prior to the step of dispensing the cleaning solution onto the surface to be cleaned.